

With these mortals on the ground.

*Enter Theseus, Egeus, Hippolita and all his traine.*

*Theseus.* Goe one of you, finde out the Forrester,  
For now our obseruation is perform'd;  
And since we haue the reward of the day,  
My Loue shall heare the musicke of my hounds.  
Vncouple in the Westering valley, let them goe;  
Dispatch I say, and finde the Forrester.  
We will faire, Queene, vp to the Mountaines top;  
And marke the muscull confusion  
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

*Hippolita.* I was with *Hercules* and *Cadmus* once,  
When in a wood of *Crete* they bayed the Beare;  
With hounds of *Sparta*; neuer did I heare  
Such gallant chiding. For besides the groues,  
The skies, the fountaines, every region neere,  
Seeme all one mutual cry. I neuer heard  
So muscull a discord, such a sweet thunder.

*Theseus.* My hounds are bred out of the *Spartan* kinde;  
So flew'd, so fanded; and their heads are hung  
With eares that sweepe away the morning dew;  
Crooke kneed, and dew-lap'd, like *Thebesian* Bulls;  
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,  
Each under each. A cry more tuneable  
Was neuer hallow'd to, nor cheer'd with horne;  
In *Crete*, in *Sparta*, nor in *Thebes*;  
Iudge when you heare. But soft, what nimphe are these?

*Egeus.* My Lord, this is my daughter heere asleepe;  
And this *Lysander*, this *Demetrius* is,  
This *Helena*, olde *Nedars* *Helena*,  
I wonder of this being heere together.

*Theseus.* No doubt they rose vp early, to obserue  
The right of May; and hearing our intent,  
Came heere in grace of our solemnity.  
But speake *Egeus*, is not this the day  
That *Hermia* should giue answer of her choice?

*Egeus.* It is, my Lord.  
*Theseus.* Goe bid the hunt-men wake them with their  
horns.

*Horns and they wake.*  
*Shout within, they all start vp.*

*Theseus.* Good morrow friends: Saint *Valentine* is past,  
Begin these wood birds but to couple now?

*Lysander.* Pardon my Lord.

*Theseus.* I pray you all stand vp.  
I know you two are Riuall enemies;  
How comes this gentle concord in the world,  
That hatred is to farre from ialousie,  
To sleepe by harte, and feare no enmity.

*Lysander.* My Lord, I shall reply amazedly,  
Halfe sleepe, halfe waking. But as yet, I sweare,  
I cannot truly say how I come heere.

But as I thinke (for truly would I speake)  
And now I doe bebinke me, so it is;  
I came with *Hermia* hither. Our intent  
Was to be gone from *Athens*, where we might be  
Without the perill of the *Athenian* Law.

*Egeus.* Enough, enough, my Lord; you haue enough;  
I beg the Law, the Law, vpon his head;  
They would haue stolne away, they would *Demetrius*;  
Thereby to haue defeated you and me;

You of your wife, and me of my consent;  
Of my consent, that she should be your wife.

*Demetrius.* My Lord, faire *Helena* told me of their stealth;  
Of this purpose hither, to this wood,

And I in furie hither followed them;  
Faile *Helena*, in fancy followed me.

But my good Lord, I wot not by what power,  
(But by some power it is) my loue

To *Hermia* (melted as the snow)  
Seems to me now as the remembrance of an idle gaude;

Which in my childhood I did doat vpon;  
And all the faith, the vertue of my heart,

The obiet and the pleasure of mine eye,  
Is onely *Helena*. To her, my Lord,

Was I betroth'd, ere I see *Hermia*;  
But like a sicknesse did I leach this food,

But as in health, come to my naturall taste,  
Now doe I with it, loue it, long for it,

And will for euermore be true to it.

*Theseus.* Faire Louers, you are fortunately met;  
Of this discourse we shall heare more anon.

*Egeus.* I will ouer-bear your will;  
For in the Temple, by and by with vs,

These couples shall eternally be knit.  
And for the morning now is something worne,

Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside,  
Away, with vs to *Athens*; three and three,

Wee'll hold a feast in great solemnity.  
Come *Hippolita*.

*Demetrius.* These things seeme small & vndistinguishable,  
Like farre off mountaines turned into Clouds.

*Hermia.* Me-thinks I see these things with parted eye,  
When euery thing seemes double.

*Helena.* So me-thinks:  
And I haue found *Demetrius*, like a iewell,

Mine owne, and not mine owne.  
*Demetrius.* It seemes to mee,

That yet we sleepe, we dreame. Do not you thinke,  
The Duke was heere, and bid vs follow him?

*Hermia.* Yea, and my Father.  
*Helena.* And *Hippolita*.

*Lysander.* And he bid vs follow to the Temple.  
*Demetrius.* Why then we are awake; lets follow him, and  
by the way let vs recount our dreames.

*Bottom* wakes. *Exit Louers.*  
*Clowne.* When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer,  
My next is, most faire *Piramus*. Hey ho, *Peter Quince*!

Flute the bellows-mender? *Snout* the tinker? *Starveling*?  
Gods my life! Stole hence, and left me asleepe: I  
haue had a most rare vision. I had a dreame, past the wit  
of man, to say, what dreame it was. Man is but an Ass,

if he goe about to expound this dreame. Me-thought I was,  
there is no man can tell what. Me-thought I was,  
and me-thought I had. But man is but a patch'd foole,

if he will offer to say, what me-thought I had. The eye of  
man hath not heard, the eare of man hath not seen, mans  
hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceiue, nor his  
heart to report, what my dreame was. I will get *Peter*  
*Quince* to write a ballet of this dreame, it shall be called  
*Bottomes Dreame*, because it hath no bottom; and I will  
sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke. Per-  
adventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it  
at her death.

*Enter Quince, Flute, Thisbe, Snout, and Starveling.*  
*Quince.* Haue you sent to *Bottomes* house? Is he come  
home yet?

*Starveling.* He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt hee is  
transported.

*Quince.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Flute.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Snout.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Starveling.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Quince.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Flute.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Snout.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Starveling.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Quince.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Flute.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Snout.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Starveling.* I will goe to his house, and see what  
the matter is.

*Thisbe.* If he come not, then the play is mar'd. It goes  
not forward, doth it?

*Quince.* It is not possible: you haue not a man in all  
*Athens*, able to discharge *Piramus* but he.

*Thisbe.* No, hee hath simply the best wit of any handy-  
craft man in *Athens*.

*Quince.* Yea, and the best person too, and hee is a very  
Paramour, for a sweet voyce.

*Thisbe.* You must say, *Paragon*. A Paramour is (God  
blesse vs) a thing of nought.

*Enter Snug the Ioyner.*

*Snug.* Masters, the Duke is comming from the Tem-  
ple, and there is two or three Lords & Ladies more mar-  
ried. If our sport had gone forward, we had all bin made  
men.

*Thisbe.* O sweet bully *Bottom*: thus hath hee lost fixe-  
pence a day, during his life; he could not haue scaped fixe-  
pence a day. And the Duke had not giuen him fixe-pence  
a day for playing *Piramus*, hee be hang'd. He would haue  
deferu'd it. Sixpence a day in *Piramus*, or nothing.

*Enter Bottom.*

*Bottom.* Where are these Lads? Where are these hearts?  
*Quince.* *Bottom*, o most couragious day! O most hap-  
pie houre!

*Bottom.* Masters, I am to discourse wonders; but ask me  
not what. For if I tell you, I am no true *Athenian*. I  
will tell you euery thing as it fell out.

*Quince.* Let vs heare, sweet *Bottom*.

*Bottom.* Not a word of me: all that I will tell you, is, that  
the Duke hath din'd. Get your apparell together, good  
strings to your beards, new ribbands to your pumps,

meete presently at the Palace, euery man looke ore his  
part: for the short and the long is, our play is preferred:  
In any case let *Thisbe* haue cleane linnen; and let not him  
that plays the Lion, paire his nailes, for they shall hang  
out for the Lions clawes. And most deare Actors, eate  
no Onions, nor Garlicke; for wee are to utter sweete  
breath, and I doe not doubt but to heare them say, it is a  
sweet Comedy. No more words: away, go away.

*Exeunt.*

## Actus Quintus.

*Enter Theseus, Hippolita, Egeus and his Lords.*

*Hippolita.* 'Tis strange my *Theseus*, y these louers speake of.  
*Theseus.* More strange then true. I neuer may beleuee  
These anticke fables, nor these Fairy toyes,

Louers and mad men haue such seething braines,  
Such shaping phantasies, that apprehend more  
Then coole reason euer comprehends.

The Lunaticke, the Louer, and the Poet,  
Are of imagination all compact.

One sees more diuels then vast hell can hold;  
That is the mad man. The Louer, all as franticke,

Sees *Helens* beauty in a brow of *Egypt*.  
The Poets eye in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance  
From heauen to earth, from earth to heauen.

And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things  
Vnknowne; the Poets pen turns them to shapcs,

And giues to aere nothing, a locall habitation,  
And a name. Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That if it would but apprehend some ioy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that ioy.  
Or in the night, imagining some feare,  
How easie is a bush suppos'd a Beare?

*Hippolita.* But all the storie of the night told ouer,  
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,  
More witnesse then fancies images,  
And growes to something of great constancie;  
But howsoeuer, strange, and admirable.

*Theseus.* Heere come the louers, full of ioy and mirth:  
Ioy, gentle friends, ioy and fresh dayes  
Of loue accompany your hearts.

*Lysander.* More then to vs, waite in your royall walkes,  
your boord, your bed.

*Theseus.* Come now, what maskes, what dances shall  
we haue,  
To weare away this long age of three houres,  
Between our after supper, and bed-time?  
Where is our vsuall manager of mirth?  
What Reuels are in hand? Is there no play,  
To eate the anguish of a torturing houre?  
Call *Egeus*.

*Egeus.* Heere mighty *Theseus*.

*Theseus.* Say, what abridgement haue you for this eue-  
ning?  
What maske? What musicke? How shall we beguile  
The lazie time, if not with some delight?

*Egeus.* There is a breefe how many sports are rise:  
Make choise of which your Highnesse will see first.

*Lysander.* The battell with the Centaurs to be sung  
By an *Athenian* Eunuch, to the Harpe.

*Theseus.* Wee'l none of that. That haue I told my Loue  
In glory of my kinsman *Hercules*.

*Lysander.* The riot of the tipple *Bachanals*,  
Tearing the Thracian finger, in their rage?

*Theseus.* That is an old deuice, and it was plaid  
When I from *Thebes* came last a Conqueror.

*Lysander.* The thrice three Muses, mourning for the death  
of learning, late decess in beggerie.

*Theseus.* That is some Satire keene and criticall,  
Not sorting with a nuptiall ceremonie.

*Lysander.* A tedious breefe Scene of yong *Piramus*,  
And his loue *Thisbe*; very tragicall mirth.

*Theseus.* Merri and tragical? Tedious, and briefe? That  
is, hot ice, and wondrous strange snow. How shall wee  
finde the concord of this discord?

*Egeus.* A play there is, my Lord, some ten words long,  
Which is as breefe, as I haue knowne a play;  
But by ten words, my Lord, it is too long;  
Which makes it tedious. For in all the play,  
There is not one word apt, one Player fitted.  
And tragicall my noble Lord it is: for *Piramus*  
Therein doth kill himselfe. Which when I saw  
Rehears'd, I must confesse, made mine eyes water:  
But more merrie teares, the passion of loud laughter  
Neuer shed.

*Theseus.* What are they that do play it?  
*Egeus.* Hard handed men, that worke in *Athens* heere,  
Which neuer labour'd in their mindes till now;  
And now haue royled their vnbreathed memories  
With this same play, against your nuptiall.  
*Theseus.* And we will heare it.